

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 03007 291812Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1258

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3007

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS LE

SUBJ: ALLON TALKS ABOUT LEBANON

1. WHEN I CALLED ON HIM THIS MORNING PRIOR TO DEPARTING ON HOME LEAVE, ALLON GAVE ME THE LATEST ISRAELI APPRAISAL OF DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON. HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THEIR MOST RECENT AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY, THE DEPLOYMENT AND SIZE OF SYRIAN FORCES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE LEBANESE FRONTIER IN THE MASLA AREA HAD NOT CHANGED WITHIN THE PAST WEEK. THE ISRAELIS ARE CERTAIN THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DIMINUTION IN EITHER SYRIAN ARMED FORCES OR SAM EMPLACEMENT, DESPITE REPORTS FROM SOME QUARTERS TO THE CONTRARY.

2. ALLON IS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT WILL BE REACHED IN THE COMING WEEKS AND IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE CHRISTIANS. HE WISHED WASHINGTON TO KNOW THAT, ACCORDING TO ALL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE ISRAELIS, THE CHRISTIANS ARE NOT BEING INTRANSIGENT AND ARE NOT BY THEIR BEHAVIOR BLOCKING THE ROAD TO A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT. THEY ARE UNEASY, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE ARAFAT-SYRIAN UNDERSTANDING SINCE THEY ARE NOT SURE THAT THE FULL CONTENTS OF THE UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN DISCLOSED. ALLON SAID CRYPTICALLY THAT THE CHRISTIANS NEED ARMS IF IN FACT THEY ARE TO SURVIVE AND HE FELT IT INCOMBENT UPON THEIR FRIENDS TO ENSURE THAT THEIR REQUIREMENTS ARE MET. AS TO AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN PLIGHT, ALLON FEELS THAT WE SHOULD GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO A CANTONAL ARRANGEMENT ALONG SWISS LINES. THIS, ALLON MEANS THAT

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WHILE LEBANON WOULD REMAIN AN INTEGRAL UNIT THE CHRISTIANS

AND THE MUSLIMS WOULD BE PERMITTED CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY WITHIN AREAS IN WHICH THEY NOW RESIDE. HE RECOGNIZES AS WE DO THAT PARTITION-WHILE ACCEPTABLE TO SOME FACTIONS WITHIN LEBANON-WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO SYRIA. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE FEELS REASONABLY SURE THAT THE SYRIANS DO NOT WANT CONTINUED STRIFE AND PERHAPS A CANTONAL SOLUTION WOULD BE THE LEAST OF EVILS FOR THEM. JUMBLATT SEEMED TO FAVOR SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES IN HIS SPEECH LAST WEEK.

3. GENERAL RAVIV (HEAD OF MFA'S INR, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT) SAID THAT WE SHOULD KNOW THAT WHILE THE SYRIAN EMBARGO ON ARMS TO THE LEFTISTS WAS HELPFUL, IT WAS NOT FULLY EFFECTIVE SINCE THE AIRPORT REMAINS UNDER LEFTIST CONTROL AND, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE, ARMS FLIGHTS FROM IRAQ AND ELSEWHERE ARE NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN CARRIED OUT IN RECENT DAYS. SECONDLY, HE FELT WE SHOULD KNOW THAT THERE IS FIRM EVIDENCE THAT THE LIBYANS ARE SUPPLYING THE LEFTISTS FORCES WITH FUNDS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR THEIR OPERATIONS WITHIN LEBANON.

4. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT THAT LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE CONTINUING TO GET CLOSE AND HIGH LEVEL ATTENTION IN ISRAEL. THE FACT THAT THE SITUATION IS REGARDED AS SO POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS TO ISRAELI INTERESTS HAS IN RECENT WEEKS ACTED AS A FORM OF CONSTRAINT ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS HERE, CERTAINLY OF A BELLICOSE NATURE.TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CHRISTIANS, MOSLEMS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, PARTITION, COUN TY GOVERNMENT, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV03007
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840086-1118
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976049/aaaaahkq.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 OCT 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLON TALKS ABOUT LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, IS, LE, SY, (ALLON, YIGAL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006